

REMARKS

In the patent application, claims 1-19 are pending. In the office action, claims 1, 13 and 14 are rejected, and claims 2-12 and 15-19 are objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

At section 2, claims 1 and 14 are objected to because of the term "capable of". Applicant has amended claims 1 and 14 to remove that term. Applicant has further amended claims 1 and 14 to remove part of the preamble that is not necessary for providing antecedent bases in the characteristic part. The removed part of the preamble is incorporated in the dependent claims 2, 6, 15 and 17. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicant has also added new claims 20-23. The support for the new claims can be found in Figure 16 and on p. 9, lines 5-7 and lines 17-20.

At section 3 of the office action, claims 1, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mahany* (U.S. Patent No. 5,696,903) in view of *Lansford* (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,302). The Examiner states that both *Mahany* and *Lansford* disclose a method and system for establishing a connection link between a master device and slave devices. The Examiner admits that *Mahany* fails to disclose a non-frequency hopping connection link, but points to *Lansford* for disclosing a non-frequency hopping link along with frequency hopping links. The Examiner states that the non-frequency hopping node 300 can interact with a frequency hopping spread-spectrum (FHSS) system 312 so as to exchange data with a frequency hopping node (302, 303) on a predetermined frequency channel when said frequency channel is active. The non-frequency hopping node 300 has filters to filter out signals outside of the predetermined frequency.

It is respectfully submitted that, in *Lansford*, the nodes (300, 302, 303) are operated either in a frequency-hopping mode or in a non-frequency mode (col. 4, lines 17-22). While these nodes can communicate with each other on a limited basis, they cannot choose which mode to operate. In *Lansford*, the node 300 first determines a frequency channel to listen. If one of the

frequency hopping nodes (node 302, for example) happens to transmit data on that particular frequency channel during its frequency pattern, only then can the node 300 transmit data to node 302 on that particular frequency channel. While node 300 can communicate with other nodes on a predetermined frequency channel, it cannot communicate with other nodes in a frequency hopping fashion. Thus, regardless of whether the non-frequency hopping link between slave device 300 and slave device 302 is available or unavailable, the slave device 300 cannot establish or maintain a frequency hopping link with slave device 302. Likewise, the slave devices 302 and 303 are frequency hopping links. *Lansford* does not disclose or even suggest that they can establish a non-frequency hopping link to each other even if the non-frequency link is available. ((

In contrast, the first and second slave devices of the claimed invention can communicate with other slave devices in a frequency hopping fashion. However, a non-frequency hopping link is preferable. If the non-frequency hopping connection link is available between a first slave device and a second slave device, then the non-frequency hopping link is established between these two slave devices. But if the non-frequency link is unavailable, then the frequency hopping link between these two slave devices is established or maintained.

Even when the non-frequency hopping node 300 in *Lansford* is included in the hierarchical communication system of *Mahany*, any two of the nodes cannot establish a frequency hopping link based on the availability of the non-frequency hopping link between these two nodes.

Thus, the cited *Lansford* and *Mahany* references do not render claims 1 and 14 obvious. For the same reason, claims 20-23 are allowable over the cited *Lansford* and *Mahany* references.

As for claim 13, it is dependent from claim 1 and recites features not recited in claim 1. For reasons regarding claim 1 above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13 is allowable.

Claims 2-12 and 15-19 have been allowed.

CONCLUSION

As amended, claims 1-19 are allowed or allowable. Newly added claims 20-23 are also allowable. Early allowance of claims 1-23 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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